



**AMBASSADOR LEWIS A. LUKENS
ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAY
REMARKS
MARCH 31, 2012**

(As prepared)

Thank you very much for welcoming me to the 14th Celebration of English Language Day. This is my second time on the campus of the Cheikh Anta Diop University, and it is great to be back.

And what a wonderful reason to be here! Congratulations to those who organized this exciting event. Happy English Language Day to all the teachers and students brought together here by their love of the English language. and have celebrated it together for the past 14 years.

I would like to recognize the efforts of the members of the Association of Teachers of English in Senegal ATES (*AH-tess*) and especially the board of ATES for your tireless dedication to improving the quality of English education in Senegal.

The theme of this year's English Language Day is "Celebrating America," and we are proud to take part.

English unites people in amazing ways – not only Americans and British but people around the world.

English unites Americans and Senegalese; Nigerians with Brazilians; South Africans with Egyptians. It also unites us as professionals. Doctors around the world publish research findings in English; airline pilots communicate with control towers in English; tourists ask for directions in English; universities around the world offer courses in English; and high school students use English on Facebook to make new friends and learn about other countries – even those whose official languages are not English!

We love the idea that Senegalese are interested in learning more about America through English. Bringing Senegalese and Americans together through English Language learning is a major focus of our Public Affairs Section at the Embassy. We

have a number of English language programs. Our American fellows program brings experienced teachers to Senegal to teach English; our *Access* program offers afterschool English lessons for Senegalese teens; and we provide support to institutions around Senegal that further English language learning.

Finally, I would like to announce that Senegalese can also improve their American English on the Internet: We recently launched a completely new webpage called *American English Online*. On this website you can find hundreds of U.S. government resources which are all related to teaching and learning English, as well as numerous resources for learning more about American culture.

You can hear more about these programs and other resources from our Embassy at the booths outside: We have one booth about our library resources and another about studying in the United States. Later in the day there will also be a presentation about American holidays by our Cultural Attaché.

English is not a better language than any other, but it has become the essential language. So thank you teachers for helping your students to learn English and for helping them to communicate with the world. Thank you ATES for organizing such events where we can use and practice English. And thank you for inviting me to speak to you today – in English. I wish you a very successful day.